

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4039

As Passed House:
February 14, 2004

Brief Description: Requesting Congress to consider Washington for magnetic levitation transportation funding.

Sponsors: By Representatives Ericksen, Dickerson, Sullivan, Campbell, Nixon, G. Simpson and Upthegrove.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/5/04, 2/9/04 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/14/04, 98-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requests federal funding for the State of Washington for magnetic levitation projects.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 27 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; G. Simpson, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Armstrong, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Cooper, Dickerson, Flannigan, Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Kristiansen, Lovick, Mielke, Morris, Nixon, Rodne, Romero, Shabro, Sullivan, Wallace, Wood and Woods.

Staff: Jerry Long (786-7306).

Background:

Magnetic levitation (maglev) is an advanced technology in which magnetic force lifts, propels and guides a vehicle over a guideway speeds of 250 to 300 miles per hour. The guideway is the physical structure along which maglev vehicles are levitated. The concept of magnetically levitated trains was first identified around 1900. The maglev technology was largely advanced in Germany and Japan particularly in the 1980s. In December 2003, the Transrapid was completed and began commercial operations in Shanghai which travels 270 miles per hour and the route is nineteen miles long. Little research in the United States was performed until the 1990s when the National Maglev Initiative was established.

To evaluate the potential for maglev to improve intercity transportation and to determine an appropriate role for the federal government, the "Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century" (TEA 21) was passed in 1998, which created a National Magnetic Levitation Technology Deployment Program. Funding consisted of \$55 million. The preconstruction planning was to identify a project that would receive up to \$950 million in authorizations for final engineering and construction of the guideway of the selected project. Applications were solicited from states or their designated authorities. Seven states received preconstruction planning grants. The United States Department of Transportation selected projects in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Baltimore, Maryland for additional study. The other five states made available \$1 million in federal funds for each of the other five projects in California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, and Nevada to further develop their plans.

Summary of Bill:

Requests that the United States Department of Transportation consider the State of Washington as a candidate for federal funding for the implementation of magnetic levitation projects.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Testimony For: In the last federal transportation authorization, seven cities in the United States received funding for magnetic levitation high capacity transportation systems. Presently the United States House and Senate have proposed re-authorization for federal transportation funding for magnetic levitation projects. Magnetic levitation in Japan and Germany since the early 1980s has been a proven technology to move passengers between cities safely at higher speeds. The new magnetic levitation system in Shanghai, China started commercial operations in December 2003 and travels at 270 miles per hour.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ericksen, prime sponsor; and George Anagnostopoulos, Volpe Center.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.